

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 31, 2018 (1:00 pm ET)



## **Top U.S. Companies and Foundations Announce Initiative to Connect Atlanta's Youth to Jobs**

*The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™ – a coalition of more than 50 U.S. companies including FedEx, HMSHost, Starbucks, Yum! Brands, Walmart and more – has picked Atlanta for its next Opportunity Hiring Fair on May 3 to connect thousands of youth to jobs*

*Job and resource fair will kick off a long-term effort with the City, State and more than 75 other regional stakeholders to help create economic opportunities for the estimated 110,000 Opportunity Youth – young people ages 16-24 who are not in school or employed*

*The national initiative has already helped more than 175,000 youth find jobs in communities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Seattle, Dallas and Washington DC, and has a goal to hire one million Opportunity Youth by 2021*

**ATLANTA (January 31, 2018)** – An estimated 4.9 million young Americans ages 16-24 are not in school or employed. In Atlanta, this translates to an estimated 110,000, or nearly 13.6 percent of, young adults<sup>1</sup>. In response, a coalition of more than 50 leading U.S. companies and foundations, known as the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™, today announced plans to address this challenge, beginning with a day-long job and resource fair on May 3 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Working with more than 75 community leaders and regional stakeholders including The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, The Center for Working Families, City of Atlanta, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Metro Atlanta eXchange for Workforce Solutions, Rockefeller Foundation, Schultz Family Foundation, United Way and others, the coalition is expected to help connect thousands of Atlanta-area youth to employment pathways with companies like including FedEx, Five Guys, HMS Host, Starbucks, Walmart, Yum! Brands and more. The job and resource fair itself will include hundreds of on-the-spot interviews and employment offers, and access to career resources, resume development, practice interviews, assistance creating online candidate profiles, as well as mentoring and coaching support.

“I am pleased that Atlanta has been selected to host the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™, which connects thousands of young people to jobs with some of our nation’s leading employers,” said **Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms**. “As we work to expand our economy, we must ensure that all our young people can realize their potential, especially those who face systemic barriers to access to employment and education. This initiative will strengthen our efforts to make sure that as Atlanta prospers, no one is left behind.”

“We are thrilled to join Mayor Bottoms and leaders from across the region as we launch in Atlanta and work to expand the coalition’s national efforts to bring economic opportunity to at least one million

---

<sup>1</sup> Measures of America <http://www.measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/>

young Americans by 2021,” said **Marie Davis, executive director of the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™**. “This unprecedented job fair is going to be an opportunity to hire and engage local youth. We welcome all Atlanta area employers and community stakeholders, who recognize the value of hiring these amazing young Americans, to join us as get ready to kick off this May.”

Since launching in 2015, the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™ has helped hire more than 175,000 youth, making it the nation’s leading employer-led movement to bring economic opportunities to young people ages 16-24 who face systemic barriers to employment and education. Nationally, youth unemployment still tops 12 percent, disproportionately impacting young people from low- to medium-income communities. Building on learnings from the coalition’s ongoing recruiting and hiring efforts across the country, the Atlanta Opportunity Fair on May 3 will kick-start a 100,000 Opportunities long-term city-wide effort supported by the Schultz Family Foundation. In partnership, with many of the region’s leading businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, as well as Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and Governor Nathan Deal’s administrations and other civic leaders, aims to employ thousands of local youth.

“Atlanta is proud to be selected as a part of the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative,” said **Hala Modellmog, president and CEO of the Metro Atlanta Chamber**. “Building an ecosystem that generates and supports a rich talent pipeline is one of our top priorities. Our business community is eager to get involved and demonstrate how we’re producing a robust workforce through corporate engagement and community outreach.”

“We celebrate the contributions of young people to Georgia’s workforce, which is why collaborative efforts like the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative are so important,” said **Ben Hames, Deputy Commissioner, Georgia Department of Economic Development**. “This impressive event will impact the lives of Georgia’s youth and making a lasting mark on our workforce and economy for years to come.”

“The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation is very excited to partner with the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative,” said **Frank Fernandez, Vice President of Community Development, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation**. “We believe in the fundamental importance of and value in investing in our youth, especially those isolated from opportunity and struggling to break the cycle of poverty. This initiative aligns with our commitment to the Westside and at Mercedes-Benz stadium to help connect opportunity youth to job opportunities that otherwise may not be available to them.”

“The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative is a phenomenal initiative for our business community to commit to providing a supportive network that assists youth with achieving employment in metro Atlanta,” said **Wendell Dallas, Vice President of Operations for Atlanta Gas Light and Chairman of Metro Atlanta eXchange for Workforce Solutions (MAX)**. “The collaboration between MAX and 100,000 Opportunities Initiative exemplifies the framework MAX has created to strengthen connections among stakeholders to develop and invest in our local workforce.”

Through partnerships with public and private sector stakeholders in Chicago, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Seattle, Dallas, and Washington, DC, the coalition has expanded its work, by doubling in size to more than 50 companies and foundations, and establishing a new goal to hire one million opportunity youth by 2021, after it surpassed its original goal of 100,000 hires two years ahead of schedule.

“FedEx is proud to once again be working with the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative to help pave the pathway to meaningful employment for youth across the country,” said **Shannon Brown, Senior Vice**

**President and Chief Human Resources and Diversity Officer at FedEx Express.** “Atlanta is a key market for FedEx and we look forward to connecting with motivated job-seekers as we continue to build our workforce in the region.”

“Through the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, Starbucks has found a unique way to unlock the talent and potential of these young people for retail and customer service roles in thousands of our stores across the country,” said **John Kelly, senior vice president, Global Public Affairs and Social Impact, Starbucks.** “The next Opportunity Fair in Atlanta is going to be a powerful moment for our nation’s top employers to come together with local leaders and demonstrate that we stand ready to hire young Americans who are looking for a chance to dream big and reach their aspirations.”

“HMSHost is thrilled to further our involvement with the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, and particularly here in the Atlanta community to help launch the careers of the next generation,” said **Susan Seubert, Vice President, Human Resources, HMSHost.** “We’re eager to get out and meet Atlanta youth and offer them opportunities with HMSHost – a company where our associates have the chance to create pathways to their own success and thrive.”

“We are pleased to launch the 100,000 Opportunity Initiative in the City of Atlanta. This is our seventh community partnership focused on recruiting, hiring and retaining young talent” said **Sheri Schultz, co-founder and president of the Schultz Family Foundation.** “There is nothing more powerful than helping a young person land a job. In addition to the job opportunities at the launch event, we are investing in ongoing efforts in the community to continue to help youth become job ready and get hired. At the Schultz Family Foundation, we believe that a job creates economic mobility and endless possibilities.”

“Our involvement in the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative has been great!” said **Jerry Murrell, founder and CEO of Five Guys.** “We offered over 100 jobs at the Washington, DC fair last year and with around 20 locations in Atlanta and surrounding areas, we are excited to meet the Atlanta youth and invite them to join the Five Guys family.”

“The national youth hiring efforts of the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative and the organization’s commitment to making jobs more accessible to our country’s youth is aligned with one of Yum! Brands core values – believing in all people,” said **James Fripp, Yum! Brands Sr. Director of Global Diversity and Inclusion.** “Yum! Brands is honored to be part of an initiative that will help elevate youth in the community to become proud, successful and professional business leaders of tomorrow.”

In Atlanta, the coalition will work alongside the region’s community and civic leaders to build on existing Opportunity Youth training and hiring efforts and ensure the initiative is sustained in the long run. After the Opportunity Fair, the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative will continue to partner with the Atlanta community to offer training, hiring and support programs, funded by the Schultz Family Foundation and other potential partners. This will help ensure that young people are prepared to enter the workforce and that employers continue to strengthen their commitment to hiring Opportunity Youth. They will also host an ongoing series of smaller events to support thousands of young adults looking for work.

#### **About the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™**

The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative™ has created the nation’s largest employer-led private sector coalition committed to creating pathways to employment for young people. Companies engaged in the coalition help launch careers for young people who are just entering the workforce, including full- and part-time work, as well as internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Each company is also

committed to developing potential in youth who have some work experience but are looking to gain new skills that lead to successful careers. Please [visit www.100kOpportunities.org](http://www.100kOpportunities.org).

**Media Inquiries:**

[Sarah.Elison@edelman.com](mailto:Sarah.Elison@edelman.com)

###